

American Samoa; November 17, 1999, in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and November 18, 1999, in Tumon Bay, Guam. Specific times and locations will be announced in a separate **Federal Register** document. The Responsible Program Manager for this EIS is Rodney R. McInnis, Acting Southwest Regional Administrator, NMFS.

Special Accommodations

Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Marilyn Luipold, (see **ADDRESSES**),

808-973-2937 (voice) or 808-973-2941 (fax), at least 5 days before the meeting date.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: October 14, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 99-27354 Filed 10-15-99; 3:22 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 990304062-9062-01; I.D. 101499A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the Gulf of Alaska

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Inseason adjustment; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues an inseason adjustment opening the D fishing season for pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) for 36 hours. This adjustment is necessary to manage the D seasonal allowance of the pollock total allowable catch (TAC) in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, A.l.t., October 14, 1999, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., October

15, 1999. Comments must be received at the following address no later than 4:30 p.m., A.l.t., October 29, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be mailed to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, Attn: Lori Gravel. Hand delivery or courier delivery of comments may be sent to the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Room 453, Juneau, AK 99801.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Furuness, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

NMFS issued a prohibition on directed fishing for pollock effective October 12, 1999, for Statistical Area 620, in accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), which was filed with the Office of the Federal Register on October 12, 1999.

As of October 13, 1999, 3,500 metric tons (mt) of pollock remain in the D seasonal allowance of the pollock TAC in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA. Section 679.23(b) specifies that the time of all openings and closures of fishing seasons other than the beginning and end of the calendar fishing year is 1200 hrs, A.l.t. Current information shows the catching capacity of vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA is in excess of 3,000 mt per day. The Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the D seasonal allowance of the pollock TAC could be exceeded if a 48-hour fishery were allowed to occur. NMFS intends that the seasonal allowance not be exceeded and, therefore, will not allow a 48-hour directed fishery. NMFS, in accordance with § 679.25(a)(1)(i), is

adjusting the D fishing season for pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA by closing the fishery at 2400 hrs, A.l.t., October 15, 1999, at which time directed fishing for pollock will be prohibited. This action has the effect of opening the fishery for 36 hours. NMFS is taking this action to allow a controlled fishery to occur, thereby preventing the overharvest of the D seasonal allowance of the pollock TAC designated in accordance with the Emergency Interim Rule establishing Steller sea lion protection measures for pollock off Alaska. In accordance with § 679.25(a)(2)(iii), NMFS has determined that prohibiting directed fishing at 2400 hrs, A.l.t., October 15, 1999, after a 36 hour opening is the least restrictive management adjustment to achieve the D seasonal allowance of the pollock TAC and will allow other fisheries to continue in noncritical areas and time periods. Pursuant to § 679.25(b)(2), NMFS has considered data regarding catch per unit of effort and rate of harvest in making this adjustment.

Classification

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds for good cause that providing prior notice and public comment or delaying the effective date of this action is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. Without this inseason adjustment, NMFS could not allow the D seasonal allowance of the pollock TAC in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA to be harvested in an expedient manner and in accordance with the regulatory schedule. Under § 679.25(c)(2), interested persons are invited to submit written comments on this action to the above address until October 29, 1999.

This action is required by §§ 679.20 and 679.25 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: October 14, 1999.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 99-27298 Filed 10-14-99; 4:33 pm]

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